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1508/1060.X

SERMON

PREACH'D before the

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QUEEN,

AT

WINDSOR.

July the 11th, 1708.

BEING

The first Sunday after the Account of the late Great Victory obtain'd over the *French* Army near *Audenarde*, by Her Majesty's Forces, and those of Her Allies, under the Command of the Duke of *Marlborough*.

Pfalm xli. Verse x, xi.

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the Heavens, I will be exalted in the Earth.

The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge.

By *THO. MANNINGHAM*, D. D.

And Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

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Pfalm xlv. Verfe x, xi.

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the Heathen, I will be exalted in the Earth.

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IN the first part of this Psalm, the Holy Author declares his Confidence in God, proclaims him his Refuge and his Strength, and says, That he will not fear, tho' the Earth be removed, tho' the Mountains be carry'd into the midst of the Sea, tho' the Waters thereof roar and are troubled, and tho' the Kingdoms be mov'd; because he knew that when God utter'd his Voice all these Tumults would cease; and accordingly, at the Eighth Verse, he calls upon Men to consider attentively what a mighty Change God had wrought in the Earth; Come, behold the Works of the Lord, what *Destruction* or *Desolations* he hath made in the Earth! *Desolation*? 'tis true, but such as were in order to a *Universal Peace*; for so it immediately follows, 'He maketh Wars to cease' unto the end of the Earth; he breaketh the 'Bow, and cutteth or knappeth the Spear in 'sunder, and burneth the Chariots in the Fire.

Be



Be still then, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the Heathen, I will be exalted in the Earth. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge.

I. The first thing that these Words suggest is, That we should take all proper Occasions to refresh our Minds with some of the *Evidences* of a *Divine Being* and *Power* in the World.

Be still, and know that I am God.

II. we are particularly invited in this Psalm to consider God as the *Lord of Hosts*, as presiding over all the events of War and Battels.

III. We are call'd upon to *Exalt* him in an especial manner at this Time, because the *Lord of Hosts* is with *Us*, the God of *Jacob* is our Refuge.

I. The first Thing that these Words suggest is, That we should take all proper Occasions to refresh our Minds with some of the *Evidences* of a *Divine Being* and *Power* in the World, It must be acknowledg'd, that the first Intention of this Psalm would lead one to speak of God, in opposition to the *Idols* of the Heathen; but to enter on such a Discourse is not so seasonable at this Time, as it is to speak of God, in opposition to those *distrustful* and *languid* Apprehensions of him, which many have in this Age.

God, who is invisible, and therefore not the immediate Object of any of our *Senses*, can be properly known only by *Reasoning*; but the *Reasoning* in this case is so natural, that it seems to be rather the first Conception of our Minds, than any nice Operation of the Understanding.

which is apt to run out into so much subtilty of Thought, and is liable to some singularity of Fancy, or to some Tinctures of Bodily Temper ; whereas the Reasoning here is Public and Universal, like the Light of the Sun in its first Effusion, before it is colour'd with various Appearances from the Objects it passes thro, or falls upon ; 'tis nothing but the Observation of such illustrious Effects, as plainly argue the Being and Nature of the Great Cause from whence they came.

For this is the Natural Privilege of all Humane Minds, to be able to collect Propositions and Truths, from what we see and hear, or from what our Senses acquaint us with : We do not rest in meer Representations of external Things ; neither do these Images rest only in the Imagination ; but we have a discerning Power within us, that can reflect upon those Images, and upon what it finds in its own Actions, and from thence can form Conceptions and Thoughts which make up the Stock and Ground of all our other Reasoning ; whereby we are able to argue from True Principles, and to look into Right and just Consequences.

Now these Understandings of ours were given us chiefly to know God, and to search out his Perfections, and to see continually further Reasons to serve and adore him ; so that the best Use we can make of them, is to be gathering more Evidences, more Demonstrations of the Divine Attributes ; and then to inforce the Consequence of such Knowledge upon our Lives and Actions.

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When therefore we look up into the *Heavens*, or when we look into *our selves*, we presently discover such *Evidences* of the *Divine Being* and *Perfections*, as satisfies every reasonable Person.

I. The *Heavens* declare the *Glory of God*, and the *Firmament* sheweth his handy-work, Psal. 19. 1. But how do they declare it? Have they any Voice? They have no Articulate Voice or Language, but they have that which answers to the main intention of a Voice; they are *significant Signs*, they are such *Characters* as manifest the *Nature* and *Mind* of God to us.

When you receive a Letter from a Friend, you have nothing there but some *black Figures* upon Paper; but yet those *Characters* lead you into the Mind, and Business, and Endearment of the Person who writes to you

Now God discovers himself *thus* to us in the *Works* that He hath made; He, as it were, speaks to us in the *Day*, by the glorious Light of the *Sun*, which as a Bridegroom cometh out of his Chamber, and rejoyceth as a Gyant, or strong Man, to run a Race; and in the Night He speaks to us by the *Moon* and *Stars* in the Firmament; so that *Day*, unto *Day* uttereth Speech, and *Night* unto *Night* sheweth Knowledge; they are our continual Instructors in their Vicissitude and Succession: One *Day* publisheth the Glory of God, and then delivers its important Message to another. &c

And if the *Visible Creation* be so stupendous a Work, that our Minds cannot trace out all the *Perfections* of *That*, what must that *Mind* be

that Made and Ordered all those Wonderful Things? What *Power* must that be, from which all Created Powers are deriv'd? What Force and Consternation is there in Thundrings and Lighnnings, and Tempests, and in such like Elements and Meteors? But then, who can conceive the *Thunder* of the Almighty Power of God? .

What *Wisdom* does it argue in any Man, to discover some of the many *Proportions*, *Designs* and *Ends*, that are legible in the Order and Harmony of the Universe? And then how easie is it to conclude, that that must be a *Mind* of *Infinite Wisdom* that contriv'd all these Things into such *Number*, *Weight* and *Measure*, that 'tis a great part of our *Wisdom* to understand any little portion of *This*?

The Sun is the *instance* which the *Psalmist's* Thoughts were most upon; and to argue for the *Power*, and *Wisdom*, and *Goodness* of God, from the *Lustre*, and *Influence*, and *Regular Motion* of that Luminous Body, is as *Natural* as it is to behold and enjoy its *Light* and *Heat*: This Sun not only cheers us in its Daily Course, but in its Annual Circuit gives a kind of Resurrection to the Vegetable World, and brings Healing in its Wings to many of our Bodily Infirmities.

Now how easily is it to conclude, that as this Sun is to the *Sensible World*, so God is to the *Intellectual*? He enlightens our Minds, He raises our Thoughts and Affections; He actuates, He invigorates, He exalts the *Soul* into a sort of a *Divine Life*.

But

But then, *Secondly*, If you will please to look into this *Soul* of yours, which is able to make these Reflections, you shall still see further Convictions and Evidences of the *Divine Being*, and of many of his *Perfections*.

Let us consider a little what that *Soul* is that is within us : 'Tis not our *Breath* ; 'tis not a hidden *Flame* that runs in our *Blood* ; 'tis not a silver Stream of *Animal Spirits* that glides in our *Nerves* ; these are all *Bodily Motions*, tho' some may be finer than others. But what is properly the *Soul* of Man ? 'Tis plainly something that *Thinks*, and that can Reason upon all the Motions and Appearances of Nature, and upon its *own Conceptions* too : Therefore we conclude it to be a *Spiritual Substance*, because its chief Properties and Effects argue it to be of such a Nature, and we can naturally know it no other-wise than as it discovers itself to us by its own Operations. But if our Souls be spiritual Substances, tho' in a low degree ; then what must God be, but *spiritual* in an infinite manner, who is all *Mind*, all *Understanding* ? or rather something greater than Mind, greater than Understanding, but we have not Conceptions nor Words to reach it.

When our Contemplation is at any time exercised about great and admirable Objects, we find our Souls rais'd and exalted by the Nobleness of their Employ ; and we feel an uncommon Satisfaction in such a high Order of Thoughts ; and when we have an excellent *End* in view, and use proper Means for the attaining

of it ; we are said to be Wise and Prudent, and to think and act as becomes truly Rational Creatures ; and there are several degrees of this Knowledge, and Wisdom and Prudence in which one Man excels another , and the same Person in a course of Proficiency excels his former Self.

But now, if such Wisdom be in Man, in Man united to a corruptible Body, that presses down the Soul ; and the Soul it self, as to its Operations in this Life, be, as it were, blended with Imaginations and Passions, which are apt to abuse the Mind with false Appearances , or to disturb it by violent Agitations, than what Wisdom must there be in the supreme Mind, that is free from all Body and Matter, or from every thing that argues either Weakness or Disorder, That sits serene above all the Heavens, Contemplating himself and his own Works, and directing all things to the best and wisest Ends!

But farther, we experience in our selves good Inclinations, kind Wishes and Desires of doing all the Good we can to our Fellow-Creatures ; and these Dispositions are so sutable to our Nature, (unless we have greatly Corrupted it) that we feel it to be a part of our own Happiness to make others Happy. Now these sweet Affections which make up the true Loveliness of Humane Nature, may easily convince us , that in God who made us , and who diffus'd this soft and precious Balsome of Goodness throughout our Souls, there must be such an Ocean, such an Immensity of Goodness, that if one may

be allow'd so to speak, could hardly be kept from overflowing into a *Creation*; and accordingly we find how God delights to Communicate Himself to almost an Infinity of Reasonable Creatures, that He may have Myriads about Him to receive and reflect some part of his own Image, and to set forth his Glory by their own Happiness and Joy.

Thus have I endeavour'd to revive some of the Evidences of a Divine Being; which by no means should be omitted upon such a *publick Blessing* as we have lately receiv'd, wherein the Great God of Heaven and Earth has so signally exerted his Power and Providence in our behalf; and I am sure, that it highly concerns every one who stands in *this Place*, to use his best Endeavours that a prevailing Sense of Religion may be mingled with all your *exulting* Thoughts and Joys; and that when your Hearts are most enlarged, they may be more fill'd with pious Resolutions of serving Him who crowneth you with Mercy and Loving-Kindness.

II. We are particularly invited in this Psalm to consider God as the *Lord of Hosts*, and as presiding over all the Events of Wars and Battels.

The *Lord of Hosts* is a Title that is frequently given to God in the *Old Testament*, because the *seven Nations* who had compleated the Measure of their Iniquity, were delivered up to *Joshua* and his Army, to have all the Miseries of War executed upon them, as a Vengeance they had justly brought upon themselves: And the Title of *the Lord of Hosts* had likewise this particular Reason

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Reason for it, because the Arm or Power of the Almighty, represented by the presence of the *Ark*, did so often and so signally interpose in the Battels which the *Israelites* fought: And tho' God's *Interpositions* be not now so immediate and so miraculous as in former Times, yet still He is the great Arbiter of all the Events in War, and gives the Victory as it pleases Him, and according to the Council of his own Will.

Nothing is more contrary to the *Nature* of God, than Offensive, Ambitious, or Revengeful War; but when Mens Passions have rais'd it, 'tis then one of the *Instruments*, that God makes use of, to chastise and govern the World.

War, consider'd in it self, is one of the most dreadful Calamities under which Mankind suffers; because the Fury and Rage of Men have so great a share in the Management of it; and therefore King *David* thought that the slyng before his Enemies was more terrible than Famine or Pestilence, in which Judgments God executes his Wrath more immediately by Himself; or, if He employs his destroying Angels, even they are more merciful than enraged Men are to those of their own Kind. *Humane Passions*, generally speaking, are the direct Cause of War, which God suffers, but does not excite; for his Justice and Wisdom may permit what his Holiness cannot authorize; and those Violences of Men which He cannot approve, He can easily over-rule to his own wise Designs.

To be sure our *Christianity*, which we all profess, has nothing to do with War, but to prevent it by the most prudent Counsels; and when it cannot, to manage it by the most gentle and merciful Ways that 'tis capable of; and to bring it, as soon as possible, to an End, that a Lasting Peace may be Establish'd.

War belongs to the Civil Rights of *Empire*, which Christianity does not directly meddle with; the best Christian Kingdom may be forc'd into a *Defensive War*, and the Justice of such Undertakings must be measur'd by the known Laws of Nature or Nations: Christianity is an Institution of an higher Order; its Laws are Spiritual, and 'tis design'd to fit us for another World, where there are no such Tumults and Conflicts as we find in this; but yet it permits us to use those common Securities which this World requires, and to enter into some of those rugged Methods of defending our selves, which the Wickedness of others *necessitates* us to use. But then again, our Christianity obliges us to make War no longer than that Necessity lies upon us, and to Judge of that Necessity too by the best Rules of Wisdom and Equity; and to bring that War we are justly engaged in, to as speedy an End, and as happy a Conclusion, as may be. And to do this, is the most glorious thing in the Eye of God, and that which falls in with His own most gracious Design; who therefore assists us in bringing Destruction and *Desolations* upon our Enemies, that they may be *still*, that they may be *quiet*, that

Wars

Wars may cease in all the World, and that the *Lord of Hosts*, may be to all a *God of Peace* and Consolation.

Thirdly, and *Lastly*, We are especially call'd upon to Exalt our God at this Time, because the *Lord of Hosts* is with us, the God of *Jacob* is our Refuge.

God is said to be *Exalted*, when any one of his Attributes are made more Illustrious to the World; when He manifests his Power, and Wisdom, and Justice, and Goodness in an extraordinary manner, that Men cannot but take notice of it, and are forc'd to acknowledge, that God Rules the World.

As to that Expression, of his *being Exalted among the Heathen*; it had an immediate respect to the *Jewish* State, which was encompass'd with Heathen Nations, who saw the Miracles by which the *Israelites* were Protected, and acknowledg'd the Power of God in the Victories which He gave them.

Now, whenever God arises and vindicates a *just Cause*, and puts *sudden stops* to a Tyranny, that was growing more and more Formidable; then may He be said to *Exalt Himself*: When Oppressions were grown to an exceeding height, and good People were ready to complain of the Prosperity of the Wicked, and were under some perplexity how to reconcile it with the common Justice of Divine Providence, then Great and Remarkable *Defeats* of such a Long-flourishing and *Universal Enemy* both to God and Man, do not only *Absolve* the Providence of God, but *Exalt* it, and *Glorify* it. They give true Religion a

new

new Lustre, and make Virtue more Amiable, inspire the Meek with a becoming Confidence in God, and fill their Hearts with Gratitude and Praise.

When God suffers Iniquity to prosper for a Time, and permits an Ungodly Project to be built to such a considerable height, that the Eyes of almost all Mankind are fix'd upon it, and they are musing with themselves what will be the Event of such a vast Attempt, then its Destruction comes most seasonable, and a large Tribute of Glory to God is rais'd out of such a *Desolation*.

We had indeed, at this time, so much *Ill News* at first, as might tempt the Malicious to express an *unnatural Joy*; but the Account of a *glorious Victory* came so suddenly upon it, that they were soon forc'd to betake themselves to their old *Envy* again, and to leave us the right and genuine Joy.

When therefore we see such glaring Evidences of God's Power and Justice, and most wise Providence; then we may truly say, That *the Lord is Exalted in the Earth*, that he makes, as it were, a *new Revelation* of Himself to the World; that Men may learn to Fear and Worship, and to Magnify His Great and Glorious Name.

As God Exalts Himself in doing wonderful Things for us and our Confederates, so we must endeavour to Exalt Him in all the Ways that Piety and Gratitude can prompt us to.

We must ascribe the Glory of all our Successes to Him, and acknowledge, that the Omnipotent

tent, the secret Arm of Providence has wrought them for us. It may be sometimes the Language of the Camp, especially before the Heat and Ferment of Victory has subsided in their Breasts, to say, *This we have done*, and *Thus we have routed our Enemies*; but the Language of the Church is otherwise, viz. *The Lord hath done these great Things for us, whereat we rejoyce*: The Conduct of the General, and the Bravery of the Forces, are the second Causes; but He that is Higher than the Highest governs all, and gives the Success to whom he pleases.

But tho' God be principally to be Exalted upon the Account of these most signal Victories that we and our Allies have had; yet, may it not be lawful, even with the greatest Reverence to Religion, to Commend those who, under God, were the main *Instruments* of these Victories? There is no doubt, but, upon such Occasions, we may speak very Honourably of them, even in the Churches, as well as in common Conversation, and give them that due Praise which their *wise Management*, and their *gallant Actions* deserve; but then we must take Care to avoid that Impious *Flattery* which is so notorious in *France*; where they think they say nothing of their Monarch and their Marshals, unless their Panegyricks swell into Blasphemy.

We may safely Commend our most Renowned General, who has learnt to do Great Things with an Evenness of Mind, and a Modesty equal to His Valour; who is truly sensible only of the Virtue and good Consequence of a Noble Action,

Action, and no ways fond of the Tumultuous Glory that attends it: The Joy that He feels is virtuous and lasting; it rises out of the Consciousness of serving his Country, and of having the Blessing of God in what He undertakes.

But then, what are *we*, that God should give us *Three* such prodigious *Victories* under the same *Renowned General*; and that the most remarkable Conduct and Success of that same *General* should create us a *New Name* of Honour throughout the World?

It must be confess'd, that we are still a very wicked Nation, but our *QUEEN* is truly *Pious*; and God loves to distinguish *That Person* with peculiar Favours, who fills a *Throne* only to *Vorship* Him, with the larger Influences of a most eminent Example. How ready and zealous is *He* always to give God all the Praise and Glory of the many publick Blessings He is pleas'd to bestow upon *Her* and us! And because *Her* chief delight is to Exalt the Lord, therefore the Lord delights to Crown *Her* Reign with prosperous events, and to give most wonderful Success to *Her* Arms, in Conjunction with those of *Her* Allies.

Let us make a true use of these *National Blessings*, and then we shall be happy indeed.

Let not our *Victories* animate us one against another, that our Enemies may not be more severely reveng'd upon us by Their *Disasters*, than they could have been by a *Victory* over us.

If we grow Insolent upon our Success, or if we serve only to flush up some into a domineering Spirit,

Spirit, and to let others loose into a prophane and riotous Mirth, our Prosperity may be only another way of Ruining us.

Wars and Victories are very solemn Things, they are the loud Voice of God calling upon Nations to Repent, and to Correct what is amiss in all Publick Designs, as well as in our Private Lives and Conversations; to be Still and Quiet, that true Religion may have its Progress, and that the Nations which have not yet receiv'd the Gospel, may receive it in its purity; that when the People that delight in War are thus scattered and weakned, We may follow our present Advantages to an Honourable Peace; in which, we hope, the poor suffering Party of the *French Protestants* may be so far consider'd, as to be restor'd to their own Country, and to their Ancient Rights; that They, and their Religion, may be establish'd upon a firmer Foundation, than the Treacherous Edicts of Ambitious and Designing Princes.

Thus may the Blessing of *Victory* proceed further to the Blessing of *Peace*; and may the Blessing of *Peace* serve chiefly to the further *Exalting* of our God, with all the Demonstrations of a Religious Joy and Zeal.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Glory, Power, Praise and Thanksgiving, both now and for evermore Amen.

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